

## CASE STUDY

# High Circulation Magazine Checkout Form Gets a Facelift

*We designed and implemented a new checkout form that converted 39% better than the original in a controlled test, equivalent to over a 20x return on investment when projected over the next two years.*

### ABOUT THE CLIENT

U.S. Alexa Rank	< 5000
Monthly Unique Visitors	2.4 million
Pageviews Per Month	8.5 million
Newsletter Emails Per Month	1.2 million

### THE PROBLEM

The magazine came to us with decades of successful print strategy under their belts and we were excited to have the opportunity to help them get more from their digital sales funnel. They had a sense that their website wasn't converting visitors into subscribers as well as it could be but weren't sure where they should focus their energy.

It wasn't an easy question.

Their digital strategy spans a massive email list, a website filled with great content, an online advertising strategy, and an active social media following.

Which area would yield the largest return on investment?

Luckily, we love tackling that exact question. We were given access to the web analytics numbers as well as key financial metrics such as lifetime client value.

Then we went to work.

## THE AUDIT

Step by step, we diagrammed each key stage in the customer journey from visitor to paying subscriber. We looked for choke points in the the funnel and compared the conversion rates with industry averages.

Next, we took a long hard look at the user experience of each step and graded how well it moved visitors towards purchasing a subscription. Any superfluous interactions, confusing elements, or unclear sections of copy were noted and categorized.

When we emerged from the analysis cave, all signs pointed at the same spot: the checkout form.

It was underperforming industry averages, didn't match the rest of the website's beautiful aesthetic, and had a number of serious user experience problems baked in. The magazine was doing a solid job getting visitors all the way through their funnel to the checkout form, but lost far too many at the finish line.

The reason the form had been neglected was clear. Magazine fulfillment is a huge undertaking and like most large magazines, they use a third party fulfillment house for billing and delivery.

This meant that their checkout form lived on a third party website and changing it was far more complicated than making tweaks to their own site. And yet, despite the complications, we estimated that the underperforming checkout form was likely costing them in the upper six figures per year in revenue.

Impressed with our analysis, they brought us on board to start recapturing the lost revenue.

## USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Our first task was to design a checkout form user experience that would convert better than the old one. Additionally, we wanted to help unify the brand aesthetics so the experience from website to checkout form would be seamless.

The design we came up with was smaller, simpler, cleaner, and looked more trustworthy than its predecessor. It had fewer options to choose and less form fields to fill out meaning it took less time to complete.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROLLED TEST

With a solid improvement plan in place, we oversaw the process of finalizing the design, then worked with development teams and stakeholders at both the magazine and third party fulfillment house to complete the implementation, helping to overcome a number of technical obstacles presented by a legacy payment processing system along the way.

Once the form was complete, we added form analytics with Mixpanel and audited the conversion tracking already in place to ensure we had an in-depth and accurate window into how visitors were interacting with the new form.

Then we chose a key segment of traffic and set up an A/B test with Google Analytics to run half the visitors at the old form and half at the new. We watched the numbers come in, and once they reached statistical significance, we reported the results to the management team.

After an unsuccessful first test, we made some tweaks and our second attempt achieved a 39% improvement over the old form. Over the course of two years of traffic, that improvement would be worth well over \$500,000 in added revenue when applied across all traffic segments that use the checkout form. That equates to over a 20x return investment for the project.



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